

our great Nation. Deborah Monette, a Federal employee at the National Nuclear Security Administration's North Las Vegas site office in Nevada manages a number of high-profile projects at the agency's Nevada test site. Her work includes stewardship of the Nation's nuclear weapons stockpile, nuclear test readiness, nonproliferation issues and emergency response programs. In that capacity, she has spearheaded critical counterterrorism initiatives for our country.

One of Ms. Monette's greatest achievements is the creation of the National Center For Combating Terrorism at the Nevada test site. The center is an intensive, hands-on training ground where Federal, State and local agencies and employees involved in combating terrorism can train for the wars of the future. It was established to provide a realistic test and evaluation laboratory for first responders.

She is a 30-year employee. I wish we would honor Ms. Monette and all Federal, State and local employees across this country.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on House Resolution 231.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. INGALLS of South Carolina). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will recognize Members for special order speeches without prejudice to possible resumption of legislative business.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to speak in the place of the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

AMERICA'S ARMED FORCES: STRETCHED TO THE LIMIT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, earlier this week, General Richard Myers, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, warned Congress that the stress on our Armed Forces of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan had raised the risk that it will take longer to prevail in conflicts elsewhere around the world. While General Myers stressed that American troops would still succeed, he acknowledged that the ongoing pace of operations has strained the military and would have a negative impact on operations, including the possibility of higher American casualties.

General Myers' candid assessment is both welcome and, to me, self-evident. A growing number of current and former military officers are expressing strong concern over the strain being placed on our Armed Forces, and for good reason: our Armed Forces are too small and the demands on them are too great.

"What keeps me awake at night," General Richard Cody, vice chief of staff of the U.S. Army, testified in a recent Senate hearing, "is what will this all-volunteer force look like in 2007?" General Cody's concerns are professional and personal. He is the father of two sons who are captains in the U.S. Army. Right now those sons are deployed on their second and third tours of combat since September 11.

Throughout the country, men and women in the Guard and Reserve are being called up repeatedly to serve. Indeed, the line between those in the Guard and Reserve and those on active duty is being blurred beyond recognition. We can no longer ask a small group of men and women to bear such a disproportionate and growing share of the burden. We must expand the standing Army and Marine Corps to provide adequate resources for our long-term national security.

When the Soviet Union collapsed in December 1991, American policymakers downsized the military in hopes of reaping a peace dividend. Our mistake at the end of the Cold War was to consider the vastly diminished threat of nuclear annihilation as signaling what one commentator called "the end of history." Even as the Soviet Union broke apart, new threats, failed States, radical Islamic terrorism and ethnic and religious strife quickly advanced to challenge the United States. The need for the forward deployment of large numbers of American troops in Western Europe may have largely disappeared, but the end of the bipolar international system has led to much greater instability elsewhere.

Before the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the conflicts in Somalia, in Haiti

and in Kosovo, already demonstrated some of the challenges that we confront in the post-Cold War era. Throughout the 1990s, even as the U.S. military maintained a significant presence in Europe, South Korea and in the Gulf region, U.S. forces engaged in these large-scale deployments. American troops are still operating in some of these areas and participating in other smaller peacekeeping operations. Despite the high tempo of activity, the strength of the active duty Army and Marine Corps went from 929,000 in 1990 to 655,000 in 2000.

While we are fighting the war on terrorism and the Iraq war and trying to meet our other commitments, the strength of our active duty Army and Marine Corps has increased only slightly in the last 5 years. At the end of 2004, 671,000 Americans were serving on active duty in the Army and Marines and virtually all of the modest increase in troop strength has come as a result of stop-loss and other measures that have kept soldiers in the force beyond the period of their enlistments.

To meet its needs, the military has mobilized hundreds of thousands of Reserve and National Guard personnel to serve in Iraq and Afghanistan, with many called to service multiple times and others activated from the Individual Ready Reserve. Because the gulf between the expectations of those joining the Guard and Reserve and the reality of today's service is so great, morale has suffered and recruitment is down.

President Bush warned the American people that the war on terror would not be easy or quick. He asked the country to make a generational commitment to promote democracy around the world. But as this applies to adequate troop strength, the administration's rhetoric has not been matched with action.

The defense authorization bill increased end strength of 20,000 for the Army and 3,000 for the Marine Corps. It also authorized an additional 10,000 Army and 6,000 Marines to be added in the next 5 years. This expansion is a beginning. The administration and Congress, though, need to take steps to increase the size of our Armed Forces by a far more substantial amount. Recently, a bipartisan group of national security experts recommended increasing the active duty Army and Marine Corps by a combined 25,000 per year for several years. Former NATO Supreme Allied Commander General Wesley Clark has called for an additional 90,000 troops to be added to the Army's ranks.

Our Armed Forces are the best in the world, but even the best can be asked to do too much with too few. As we continue our missions in Iraq and Afghanistan and confront potential challenges in North Korea, Iran and elsewhere, we must acknowledge that our current force level does not meet our security needs.

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Beefing up our recruiting efforts will not be easy, but we have little choice.